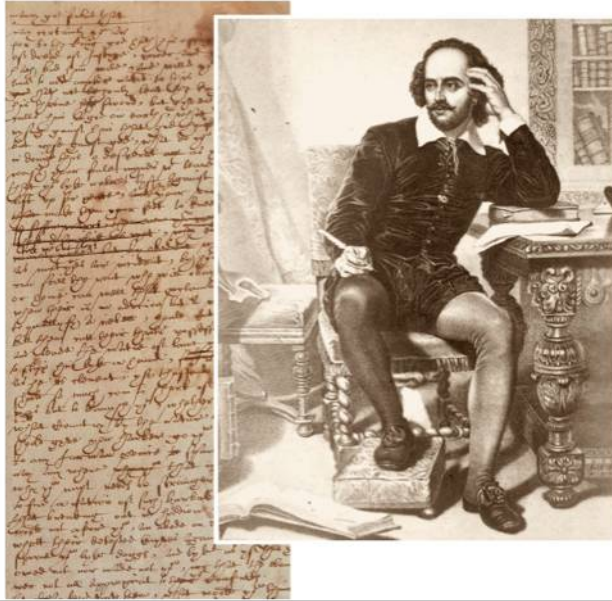


# Why SHAKESPEARE?



:55

Introduce yourselves.

:00

Good morning. Welcome to Expos 20, "Why Shakespeare?" My name is Jeff Wilson. Students usually call me 'Wilson.' It's kind of like "Madonna" or "Beyonce." As you'll learn, I'm quite a diva.

Our syllabus says this is a writing course, and a Shakespeare course, but what we're really doing in this course is better living through interpretation. So I want to start out today with some interpretation, and we'll dive right in.

/:01



## WHY SHAKESPEARE IN HIGH SCHOOL?



:01

Who read Shakespeare in high school?

/:01:30

## WHY SHAKESPEARE IN HIGH SCHOOL?

- Should Shakespeare be so common in high school?
- Why is Shakespeare so common in high school?
- What Shakespeare texts did you read?
- Why is Shakespearean tragedy so popular in high school?

:01:30

Should Shakespeare be so common in high school?

That's an ethical question (about what we should do): not interested. I'm interested in analytical questions (about what is true and why).

Why is Shakespeare so common in high school?

Note that someone who thinks Shakespeare should be cut from the curriculum and someone who thinks every high school should have a required two-year Shakespeare course can—theoretically—agree in their interpretation of the analytical question of why Shakespeare is popular.

What Shakespeare texts did you read?

So, what kind of Shakespeare is popular in high school? It's usually the tragedies. Now we've got a more specific and manageable question.

Why is Shakespearean tragedy so popular in high school?

/:03

## WHY SHAKESPEARE IN HIGH SCHOOL?



:03

What we're asking is: Why is Shakespeare given the value he is given?

Consider the analogy to the dollar bill. How much is this worth? \$1. Why is this worth \$1? It's not just purely arbitrary projection. Why is this piece of paper—and not big red rubber bouncy balls—worth \$1?

/:03:30

## WHY SHAKESPEARE IN HIGH SCHOOL?

$$A + B = C$$

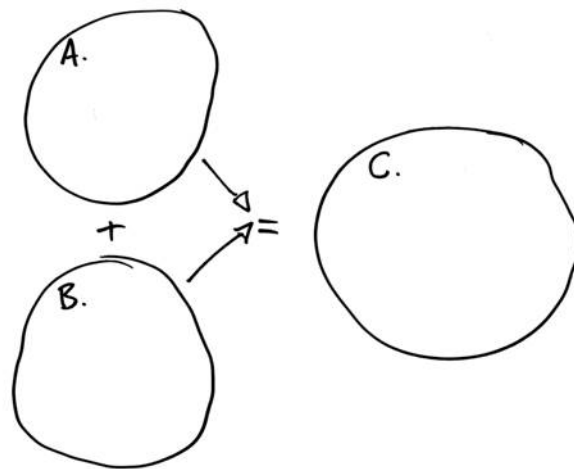
:03:30

So here's a simple logic that we'll use a lot in our course.

$A + B = C$

/:03:45

## WHY SHAKESPEARE IN HIGH SCHOOL?



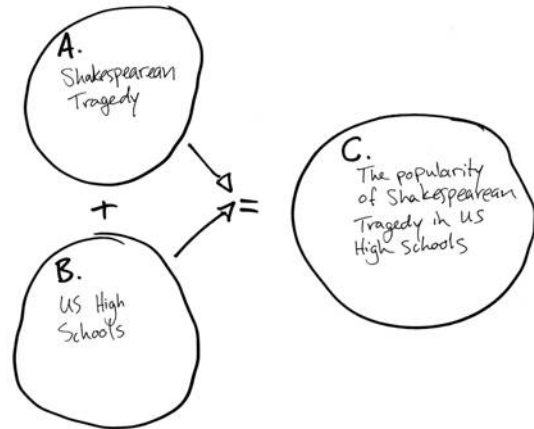
:03:45

Where (A) is the intrinsic qualities of something, (B) is the external cultural forces working upon it, and (C) is its value.

/:04

## WHY SHAKESPEARE IN HIGH SCHOOL?

- (A) What are the features of Shakespearean tragedy?
- (B) What are the assumptions, motives, values, and commitments of high school teachers and admins?
- (C) What needs and desires of the high school system does Shakespeare satisfy?



:04

(A) What are the features of Shakespearean tragedy?

(B) What are the assumptions, motives, values, and commitments of high school teachers and admins?

(C) What needs and desires of the high school system does Shakespeare satisfy?

/:04:30

## WHY SHAKESPEARE IN HIGH SCHOOL?

- Reading Shakespeare kills time, and high school English teachers need to fill the hours of the day.
- High schools are mindless machines reflecting the values of mainstream culture. Shakespeare is popular in high school because Shakespeare is popular in mainstream culture.
- Public high schools are subject to government oversight. Shakespeare is popular in high school because he represents an image of culture that the empowered politicians and administrators in charge of curriculum want to perpetuate.
- Shakespeare is popular because his works are a substantive good. They contain in them ideas that are worth knowing in and of themselves, and worth teaching in schools.
- Shakespeare is popular because his works are an instrumental good. The act of reading, interpreting, and studying Shakespeare is good practice for the analysis we must do of other things in life.
- Shakespeare's plays work on multiple levels, like high school—both a surface level and a deeper level. High school is a time of transition from the ease, pleasure, and joy of childhood to the difficulty, pain, and work of adulthood. As both humorous and philosophical, Shakespeare appeals on both levels.

:04:30

Let's consider some possible arguments, and then I'll open it up to you.

- Reading Shakespeare kills time, and high school English teachers need to fill the hours of the day.
- High schools are mindless machines reflecting the values of mainstream culture. Shakespeare is popular in high school because Shakespeare is popular in mainstream culture.
- Public high schools are subject to government oversight. Shakespeare is popular in high school because he represents an image of culture that the empowered politicians and administrators in charge of curriculum want to perpetuate.
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and a deeper level. High school is a time of transition from the ease, pleasure, and joy of childhood to the difficulty, pain, and work of adulthood. As both humorous and philosophical, Shakespeare appeals on both levels.

:06

Conversation formation: Based on your experience and interpretation, why is Shakespeare so popular in high school?

/:10



## AN INCLUSIVE, SUPPORTIVE, ACCESSIBLE CLASSROOM



:10

We're going to push the mechanics of how our course runs to Thursday. But I want to say a word about how we're going to create a good learning environment by fostering an inclusive, supportive, accessible classroom.

## AN INCLUSIVE, SUPPORTIVE, ACCESSIBLE CLASSROOM

Our classroom is inclusive:

- We welcome all.
- Our diversity is our strength.
- We practice freedom of expression, to the extent that your exercise of that freedom does not infringe upon someone else's rights.
- Intolerance is the only thing we'll be intolerant of.
- Feel free to provide your pronouns to classmates and me. (And feel free not to.)
- Practice name-based conversation.

:10

/:11

## AN INCLUSIVE, SUPPORTIVE, ACCESSIBLE CLASSROOM

Our classroom is supportive:

- This is a place for education.
- We'll address some difficult topics that touch upon deeply held ideas, values, identities, and experiences.
- Disagreement is ok—note that you're much more comfortable disagreeing with friends than with strangers or foes.
- It's ok to make mistakes.
- No one will be posting about you on social media.
- (Side note: don't post about your classmates. Talk with people, not about people.)
- When mistakes are made, those are opportunities for education.
- Be an educator, not a cultural warrior.

:11

/:12

## AN INCLUSIVE, SUPPORTIVE, **ACCESSIBLE** CLASSROOM

Our classroom is accessible:

- Feel free to get up and move around when the class is seated.
- Feel free to stay seated when the class is up and moving around.
- We'll have a short one-on-one meeting on Friday: we can chat about plans to ensure accessibility.
- Harvard's Accessible Education Office (AEO) works closely with the Expos program to think about accessibility. If there is something inaccessible about this course, let's talk, and we'll get connected with them.

:12

/:13



## HOW SHAKESPEARE?



15

/:15:15

## SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE (1564-1616)



Parish Records of the Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon:

### *Christenings*

1564, April 26. Gulielmus filius Iohannes Shakespere

1583, May 26. Susanna daughter to William Shakespeare

1585, February 2. Hamnet & Iudeth sonne & daughter to Willia' Shakespere

### *Burials*

1596, August 11. Hamnet filius William Shakespere

1601, September 8. Mr. Iohanes Shakespere

1608, September 9. Mayry Shaxspere wydowe

1616, April 25. will Shakspere gent

1623, August 8. Mrs Shakspeare

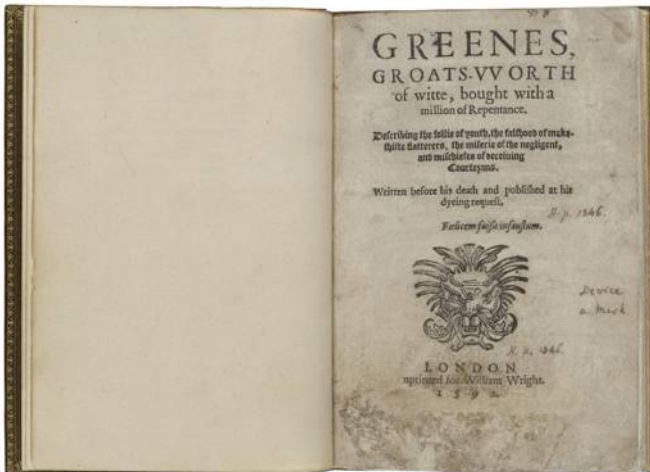


The documented facts we know about Shakespeare's life are fairly few. That's entirely predictable for someone born into sixteenth-century working-class England. (There's much more documentation of the lives of nobles.)

We don't know for sure when Shakespeare was born, but do know when he was christened, and know that christenings usually happened three days after birth.

So Shakespeare's birthday is celebrated on April 23, which happens to be St. George's Day in England, lending to the notion that Shakespeare is himself a secular English saint.

## SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE (1564-1616)



Robert Greene, *Greene's Groats-Worth of Witte* (1592):

There is an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and beeing an absolute Iohannes fac totum, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a country.

The first reference to Shakespeare in London comes in 1592. It's not very flattering.



## SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE (1564-1616)



There are a few more records in surviving documents, but not much. That absence of concrete information about Shakespeare's life has allowed people to do all sorts of imaginative recreations of it, filling in the gaps.

## SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE (1564-1616)



Here's the BBC show "Upstart Crow."

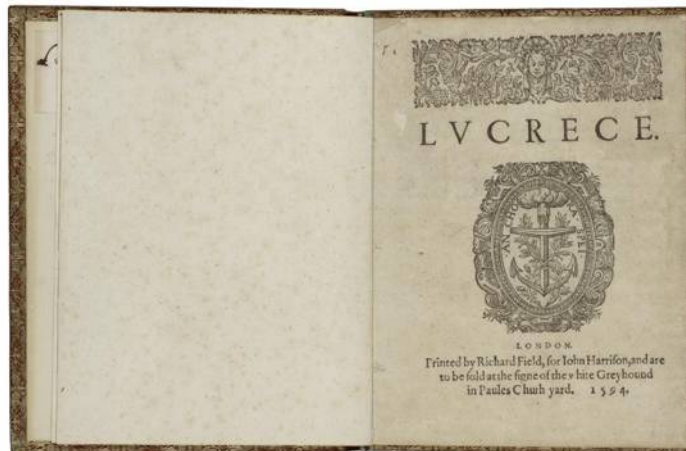
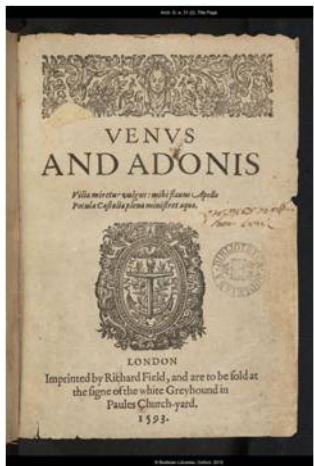


## SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE (1564-1616)

And here's the TNT show "Will."

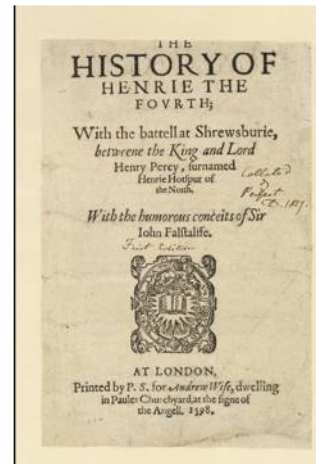
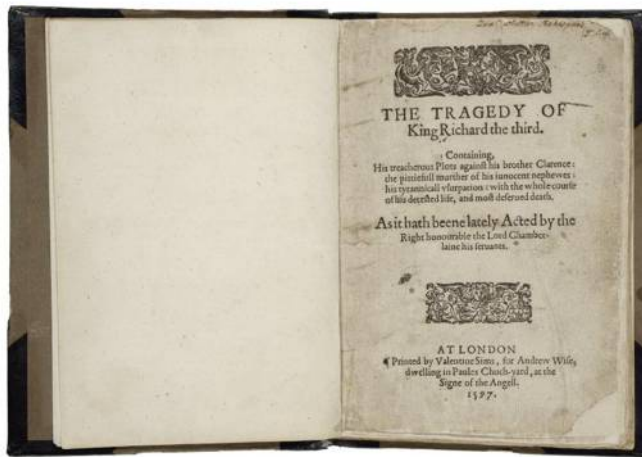
It was cancelled after one season.

## SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE (1564-1616)



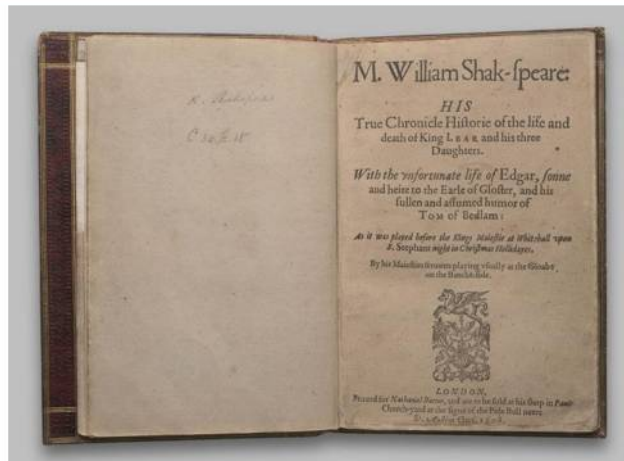
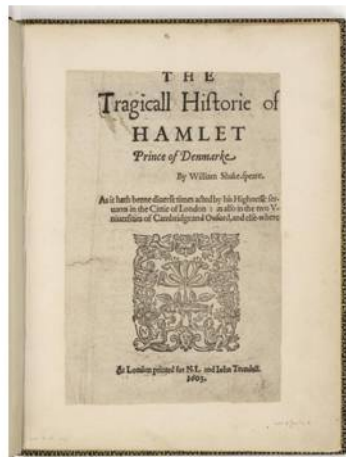
Initially, it was his poetry, not his plays, that people knew him for.

## SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE (1564-1616)



Then, among his plays, it was his history plays about English kings – not the tragedies or the comedies – that made Shakespeare famous.

## SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE (1564-1616)



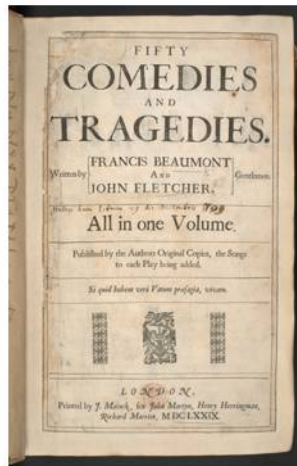
The tragedies that we associate with him now, like Hamlet and King Lear, were relatively less popular.

## SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE (1564-1616)



We think the first international Shakespearean production occurred in 1607 on the Red Dragon - Hamlet, three weeks later Richard II – while the ship was anchored off the coast of Sierra Leone.

## SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE (1564-1616)



Even within his own lifetime, people were already adapting Shakespeare's plays. John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed* (1611), the first Shakespearean adaptation, took issue with the retrograde sexism in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.

## SHAKESPEARE'S EARLY RECEPTION (1616-40)



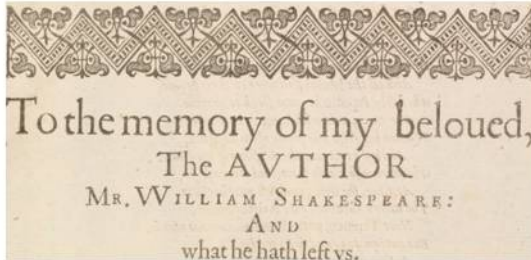
Shakespeare died at the age of 52 in 1616

At his death, he got a pretty humble gravestone in the church at Stratford-upon-Avon. The epitaph says:

Good frend for Iesvs sake forbear,  
to digg the dvst enclosed heare:  
Blese be y' man y' spares thies stones, and cvrst be he y' moves my bones.

We've been "moving Shakespeare's bones" ever since.

## SHAKESPEARE'S EARLY RECEPTION (1616-40)



Ben Jonson, "To the Memory of my Beloved Master William Shakespeare" (ca. 1616):

Soul of the age!  
The applause! delight! the wonder of our stage!  
My SHAKSPEARE rise! I will not lodge thee by  
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie  
A little further, to make thee a room....  
Far thou didst our Lyly outshine,  
Or sporting Kyd, or Marlowe's mighty line. (17-30)

Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show  
To whom all Scenes of Europe homage owe.  
He was not of an age, but for all time! (41-43)

At his death, there were friends who celebrated him as the greatest of his time:

Soul of the age!  
The applause ! delight ! the wonder of our stage!  
My SHAKSPEARE rise !

Flash back to the 1530s, when Henry VIII declared England an empire. Soon, like other empires in history, England went looking for a literary figurehead to stand as its poet laureate. Traditionally, such figureheads were epic poets – Homer, Virgil, Dante – who celebrated the founding of the culture (the Greek Empire, the Roman Empire, and the Holy Roman Empire).

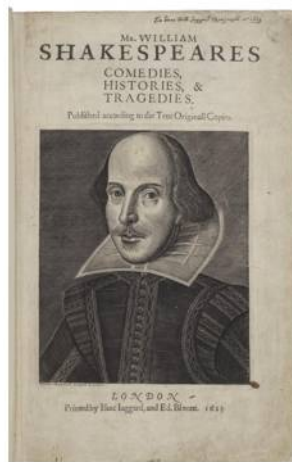
Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show  
To whom all Scenes of Europe homage owe.  
He was not of an age, but for all time!

## SHAKESPEARE'S EARLY RECEPTION (1616-40)



Shakespeare's Funerary Monument was built at the Holy Trinity Church in Stratford sometime before 1623.

## SHAKESPEARE'S EARLY RECEPTION (1616-40)



What's called Shakespeare's "First Folio," the first collected works, was published in 1623, seven years after his death.

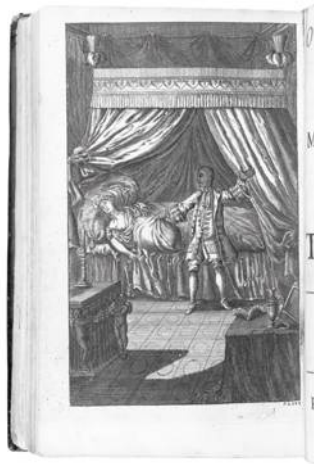
## SHAKESPEARE'S EARLY RECEPTION (1616-40)

John Webster, *Monuments of Honor* (1624):

*Chaucer, Gower, Lidgate, Moore and for our time  
Sr. Phillip Sidney, glory of our clime,  
These beyond death a fame to Monarckes giue,  
And these make Cities and Societies liue.*

Around that time, when the great English writers were named, Shakespeare was nowhere to be found. John Webster mentioned Geoffrey Chaucer, John Gower, John Lidgate, Thomas More and “for our time” not Shakespeare but “Sr. Phillip Sidney, glory of our clime.”

## SHAKESPEARE IN RESTORATION THEATER (1660-1700)



In 1641, the theaters in England were shut down for almost 20 years during a time of civil war. King Charles I was dethroned and executed in 1649 by Puritans who hated the theater. In 1660, his son, Charles II, was restored to the throne and opened theaters back up.

No one had been writing plays for 20 years, so they turned to many 50-year-old plays, including Shakespeare's.

The first major English production to feature female actors was a production of *Othello* on December 8, 1660.

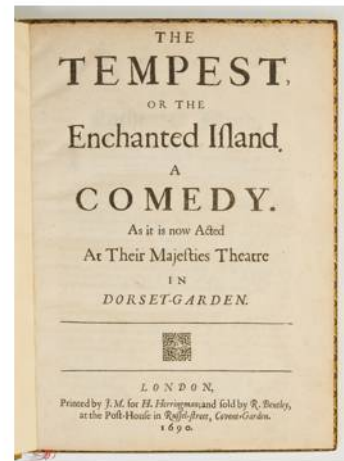
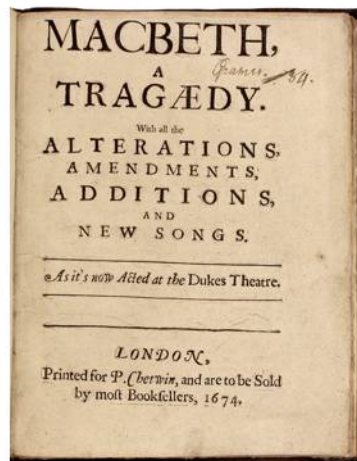
## THOMAS RHYMER, A *SHORT VIEW OF TRAGEDY* (1693)

Thomas Rhymer, *A Short View of Tragedy* (1693):

The Character of that State [Venice] is to employ strangers in their Wars; but shall a Poet thence **fancy that they will set a Negro to be their General; or trust a Moor to defend them against the Turk?** With us a Black-amoor might rise to be a Trumpeter; but Shakespeare would not have him less than a Lieutenant-General. ... Nothing is more odious in nature than an improbable lie, and, certainly, never was any play fraught, like this of *Othello*, with improbabilities. (91-92)

Shakespeare was often attacked, as in Thomas Rymer's racist 1692 attack on *Othello* because he thought a black war hero was improbable.

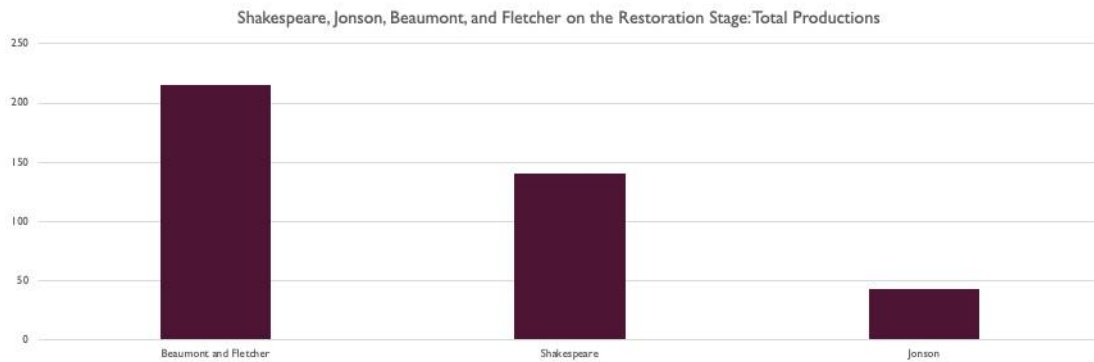
## SHAKESPEARE IN RESTORATION THEATER (1660-1700)



His plays were often altered (including politically to suit the conservative Restoration government dominant at the time).

King Lear and Romeo and Juliet were given happy endings. Macbeth and The Tempest were made into operas.

## SHAKESPEARE IN RESTORATION THEATER (1660-1700)



Playwrights contemporary with Shakespeare, especially John Fletcher, were more popular; Ben Jonson was more highly regarded; Shakespeare only became the most celebrated Renaissance dramatist in the final decade of the seventeenth century.

## SHAKESPEARE IN RESTORATION THEATER (1660-1700)

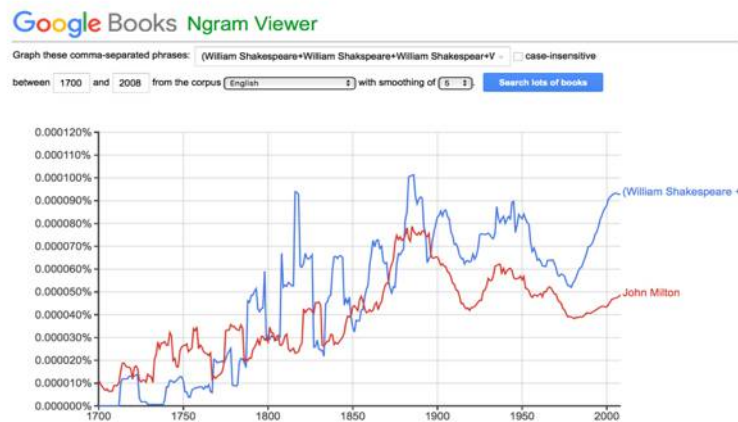
John Dryden, *A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire*, (1693):

The English have only to boast of Spenser and Milton, who neither of them wanted either Genius, or Learning, to have been perfect Poets. (viii)

But still, Spenser and Milton were said to have been better, as John Dryden wrote.

Everyone thought England's national poet was going to be John Milton, author of *Paradise Lost*. Milton himself assured us he would be the one.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (1700-1800)



Here's a Google Ngram, which tracks the relative frequency of words over time – that is, how popular a word or phrase is.

Let's pause here for some conversation and questions.

Looking at this chart, what are the observations you can make, and what are the questions you can ask.

/:30

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (1700-1800)

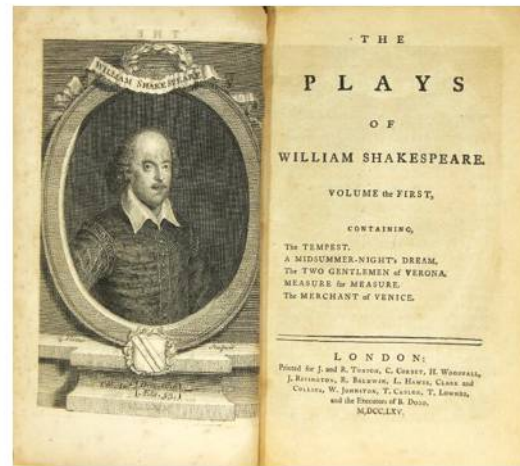
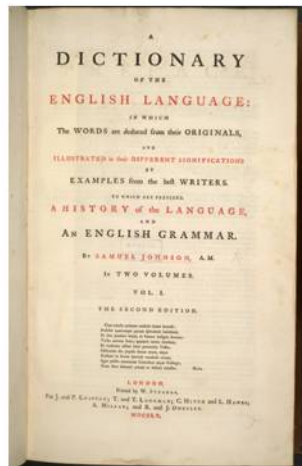
Date	Editor	Title
1709	Nicholas Rowe	<i>The works of Mr. William Shakespear in six volumes: adorn'd with cuts.</i>
1725	Alexander Pope	<i>The works of Shakespear in six volumes, collated and corrected by the former editions.</i>
1725	George Sewell	<i>The Works of Mr. William Shakespear. The Seventh Volume, Containing Venus and Adonis, Tarquin and Lucrece and Mr. Shakespear's Miscellany Poems: to which is Prefix'd, an Essay on the Art, Rise, and Progress of the Stage in Greece, Rome, and England and a Glossary of the Old Words Us'd in These Works</i>
1733	Lewis Theobald	<i>The Works of Shakespeare in Seven Volumes</i>
1744	Thomas Hanmer	<i>The works of Shakespear: in six volumes, carefully revised and corrected by the former editions, and adorned with sculptures designed and executed by the best hands.</i>
1747	Alexander Pope and William Warburton	<i>The works of Shakespear in eight volumes: The Genuine Text (collated with All the Former Editions, and Then Corrected and Emended) Is Here Settled</i>
1752	William Dodd	<i>The Beauties of Shakespear: Regularly Selected from Each Play, with a General Index, Digesting Them under Proper Heads; Illustrated with Explanatory Notes, and Similar Passages from Ancient and Modern Authors</i>
1765	Samuel Johnson	<i>The Plays of William Shakespeare: In Eight Volumes, With the Corrections and Illustrations of Various Commentators</i>
1767	Edward Capell	<i>Mr. William Shakespeare: His Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i>
1780	Edmond Malone	<i>Supplement to the Edition of Shakspeare's Plays Published in 1778 by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens.: In Two Volumes: Containing Additional Observations by Several Of the Former Commentators: To Which Are Subjoined the Genuine Poems of the Same Author, and Seven Plays That Have Been Ascribed to Him; with Notes by the Editor and Others</i>

Shakespeare's rising fortunes were aided by the creation of several editions of finely curated *Complete Works*.

You really don't see this many editions of other early English authors. The most important is Samuel Johnson's 1765 edition.

Many of these editions made "improvements" to the texts. Many were politically motivated. For example, the possibility of bi- and homosexuality was edited out of the *Sonnets* for centuries, an erasure of that identity.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (1700-1800)



Twenty years earlier, Johnson had published the first modern dictionary, which is loaded with examples of word usage from Shakespeare.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (1700-1800)



Shakespeare had a huge presence in the rise of naturalistic painting in the eighteenth century.

On the left, that's William Hogarth, *Falstaff Examining His Troops* (ca. 1730). On the right is Hogarth's *A Scene from 'The Tempest'* (ca. 1735)

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (1700-1800)



In 1740, the monument to Shakespeare was erected in Westminster Abbey (in poet's corner). Note the centrality of Shakespeare in the arrangement. The argument that Shakespeare is central to England was catching on.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (1700-1800)



Thirty years later, “jubilees” celebrating Shakespeare’s birthday and idolizing him as the best England had produced started.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (1700-1800)



The eighteenth-century feminist London collective, the Blue Stockings Society, loved Shakespeare.

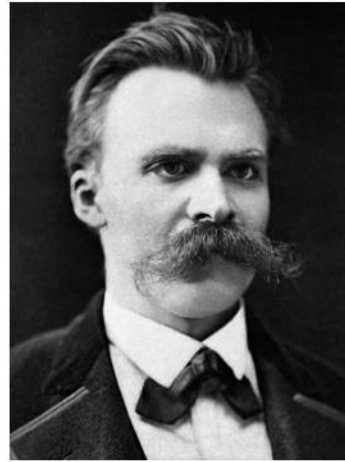
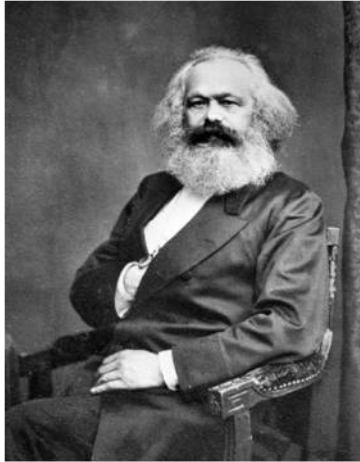
(This is Richard Samuel, *Portraits in the Characters of the Muses in the Temple of Apollo* [1778])

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1900)



The British Empire continued its imperial project in the Victorian age, Shakespeare serving as a symbol for the greatness of Great Britain.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1900)



Shakespeare has been a darling of of German philosophers, including Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche, as well as modern Marxists fighting economic oppression.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1900)



In 1807, the first adaptation for children, called *Tales from Shakespeare*, was published.

There's now many examples, such as *The Lion King*, which is based on *Hamlet*.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1900)



He set the stage for the earliest black actors in Britain. That's the first black actor in England, Ira Aldridge.

But there are also terrible traditions of Shakespearean blackface, including this voodoo witchdoctor from Edmund Kean in the eighteenth century, as recent as Anthony Hopkins's blackface Othello in 1981.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1900)



Women's Shakespeare reading clubs were at the forefront of the American suffrage movement in the nineteenth century.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1900)

Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero Worship & the Heroic in History* (1840):

Of this Shakspeare of ours, perhaps the opinion one sometimes hears a little idolatrously expressed is, in fact, the right one I think the best judgment not of this country only, but of Europe at large, is slowly pointing to the conclusion, That Shakspeare is the chief of all Poets hitherto; the greatest intellect who, in our recorded world, has left record of himself in the way of Literature. (121)

In 1840, Thomas Carlyle said:

Of this Shakspeare of ours, perhaps the opinion one sometimes hears a little idolatrously expressed is, in fact, the right one I think the best judgment not of this country only, but of Europe at large, is slowly pointing to the conclusion, That Shakspeare is the chief of all Poets hitherto; the greatest intellect who, in our recorded world, has left record of himself in the way of Literature. (121)

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1900)



Shakespeare has inspired some of our most well known music.

That's Felix Mendelson, Wedding March from AMND (1842)

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1900)



In 1847, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust was established. That would really be the beginning of Shakespeare tourism.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1900)



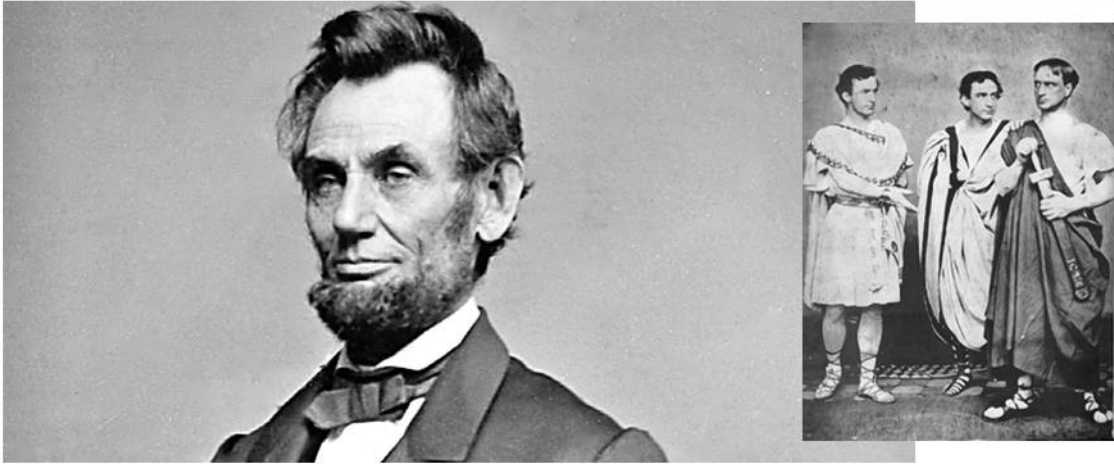
The Astor Place Riot occurred on May 10, 1849 in Manhattan, a dispute over who - Edwin Forrest (American) or William Charles Macready (English) – played Macbeth better. Estimates are that 22-31 people died.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1900)



In 1857, Delia Bacon claimed a commoner like Shakespeare couldn't have written those plays, inaugurating the "Shakespeare authorship controversy."

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1900)



Both Abraham Lincoln and John Wilkes Booth saw their cause in Shakespeare.

Lincoln worried he would turn into Macbeth.

Julius Caesar in New York City in 1864: John Wilkes as Marc Antony, Edwin as Brutus, Junius as Cassius

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1900)



The Royal Shakespeare Theater was opened in 1879.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1900)



The Shakespeare Memorial Room in the Birmingham Library, built in 1882.

Shakespeare was at the center of the “civic gospel” of Birmingham reformer George Dawson, who called Shakespeare the “meeting point” of all races and genders.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1900)



Shakespeare's also well represented in opera This is Verdi's Falstaff (1893)

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1800-1900)



King John (1899) - 1st William Shakespeare Film Adaptation

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)

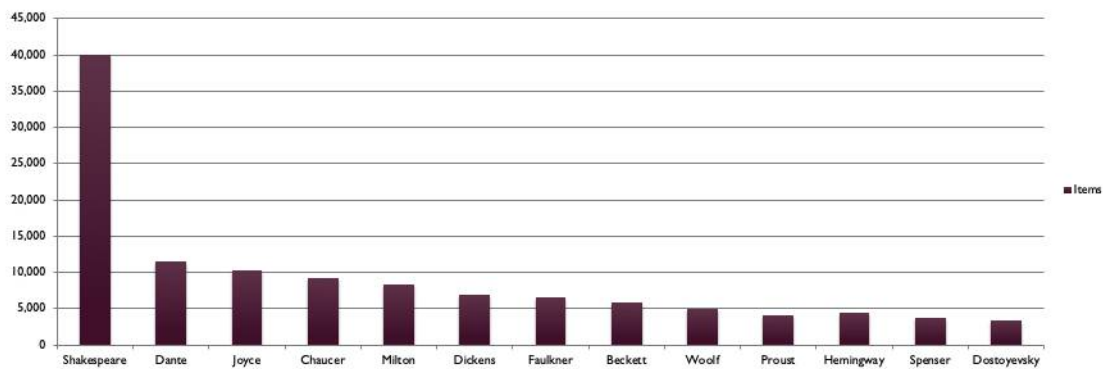
George Bernard Shaw, *Three Plays for Puritans* (1901):

It was the age of gross ignorance of Shakespear and incapacity for his works that produced the indiscriminate eulogies with which we are familiar. It was the revival of serious attention to those works that coincided with the movement for giving genuine instead of spurious and silly representations of his plays. So much for Bardolatry! ("Preface")

In 1901, G.B. Shaw complained:

It was the age of gross ignorance of Shakespear and incapacity for his works that produced the indiscriminate eulogies with which we are familiar. It was the revival of serious attention to those works that coincided with the movement for giving genuine instead of spurious and silly representations of his plays. So much for Bardolatry! ("Preface")

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



But Shakespeare has been far-and-away the most popular author in literary studies, followed in this chart by Dante, Joyce, Chaucer, Milton, Dickens, Faulkner, Becket, Woolf, Proust, Hemingway, Spenser, and Dostoyevsky.

Pause for comments, questions, and conversation.

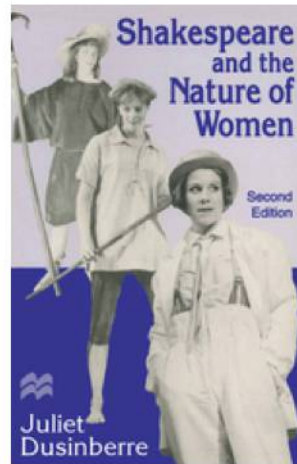
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## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



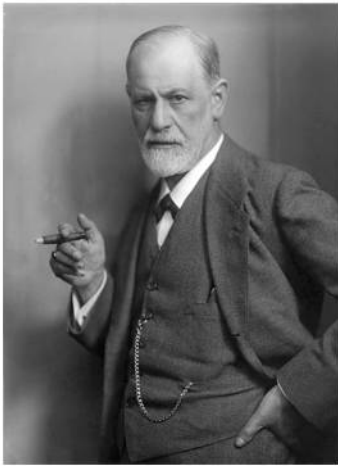
The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC was built in 1932.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



Shakespeare has been both foe and friend of feminism – seen as a privileged man by Virginia Woolf, and as a proto-feminist by Juliet Dusinberre.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



Shakespeare was loved by the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud.

He's been adapted into science fiction like Forbidden Planet.

He's been filtered through existentialism and the theater of the absurd, as in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead.

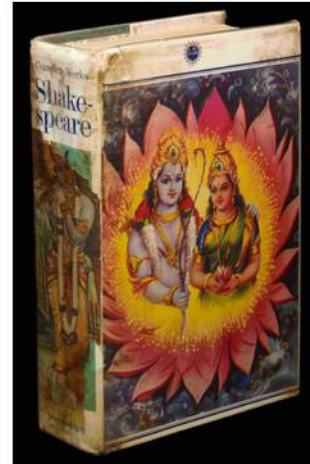
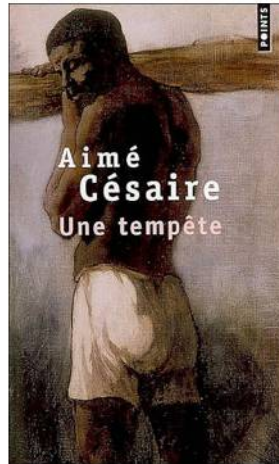
## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



In the 1930s, Paul Robeson's Othello was the first black character to kiss a white character on a major American stage.

NAZIs saw their values in Shakespeare.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)

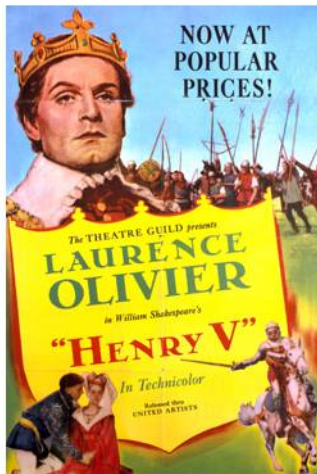


African American writers like James Baldwin and Maya Angelou saw their civil rights struggles in Shakespeare.

As the British Empire lost its status during the middle decades of the twentieth century, the Shakespeare who symbolized the empire came to be viewed with suspicion as well.

Anti-apartheid South Africans saw Shakespeare in their movement.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



In the mid-twentieth century, Laurence Olivier made several popular Shakespeare films: here's Henry V, Hamlet, and Richard III.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



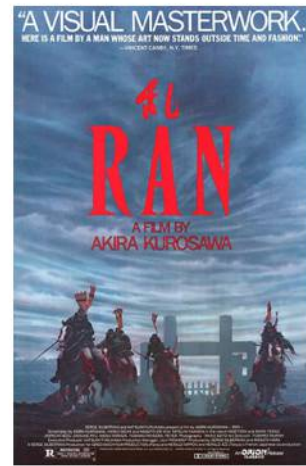
The New York Shakespeare Festival, later known as Shakespeare in the Park, began in 1954.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



When theater was outlawed because it gathered dissidents in communist Czechoslovakia, Pavel Kohout staged *Macbeth* in his friend's living room, under surveillance from police outside the apartment.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



Adaptations from the likes of Akira Kurosawa have created spaces for cross-cultural conversation.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



*The Tempest* has provided a platform for non-binary sexuality in the films of Derek Jarman and Peter Greenaway.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



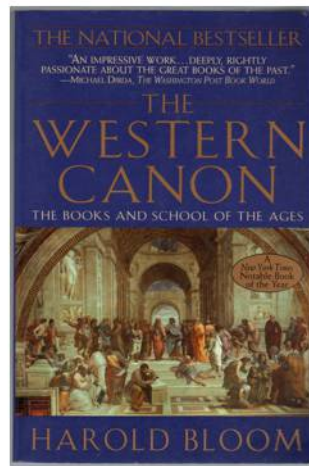
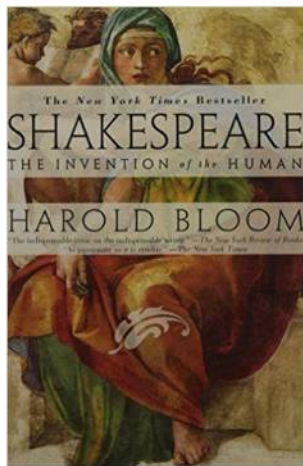
The American Shakespeare Center opened in 1988.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



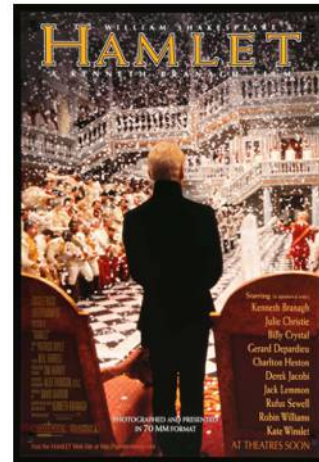
Architect of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Osama Bin Laden's journal says he first decided the West was unholy in a trip to Shakespeare's birthplace as a teenager.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



In the 1990s, literary critic Harold Bloom said Shakespeare is the center of the Western Canon, and that Shakespeare invented the human.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



Starting with Henry V in 1989, Kenneth Branagh has done several big-budget Hollywood Shakespeare films.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



Trump's chief political strategist, Steve Bannon, wrote two absurd Shakespeare adaptations in the 1990s.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



Hollywood Shakespeare films were all the rage in the 1990s.

Sports-inflected Shakespeare films like *O* (2001) and *She's the Man* (2006) pose questions of race and gender to teen audiences.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



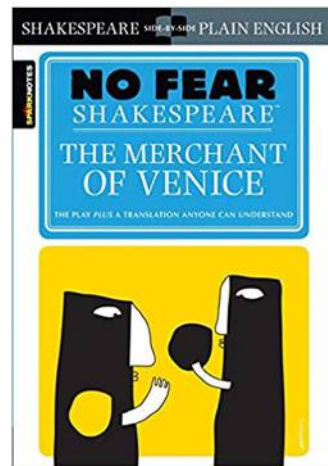
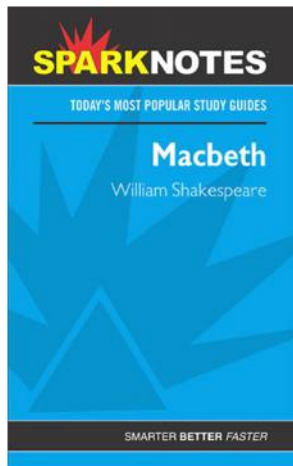
A replica of Shakespeare's Globe was rebuilt in London in 1997.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



*The Donkey Show* (1999), based on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is a staple of the LGBTQ+ experience in Cambridge, MA.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



There's an entire industry of study aids marketed for Shakespeare.

He's the only author to be mentioned by name in the Common Core standards.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900-2000)



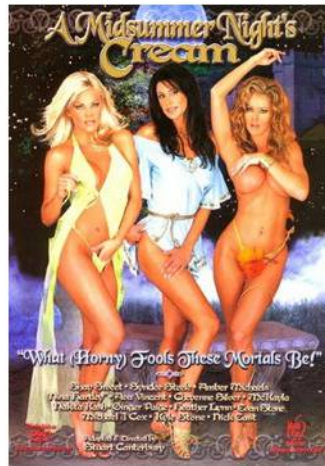
"UK Bard is Millennium Man," BBC News (Jan. 1, 1999):

William Shakespeare has been chosen as British Person of the Millennium by listeners of BBC Radio 4's flagship news and current affairs programme Today. The playwright beat Sir Winston Churchill into second place by a narrow margin with William Caxton a little way behind in third.

- Voting for the final six contenders was:
- 1. William Shakespeare - 11,717 votes
- 2. Winston Churchill - 10,957 votes
- 3. William Caxton - 7,109 votes
- 4. Charles Darwin - 6,337 votes
- 5. Isaac Newton - 4,664 votes
- 6. Oliver Cromwell - 4,653 votes.

Shakespeare was voted "Personality of the Millennium," odd for someone who so methodically left his personality out of his work.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



There's the apparently thriving Shakespearean porn industry, with titles like...

Pause for comments, questions, and conversation.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



The X-men franchise is stuffed with Shakespearean actors, including four who have played Macbeth.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



Shakespeare has reformed incarcerated criminals by helping them acknowledge their past and envision a different future.

SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)

# Shakespeare Insult Kit

To create a Shakespearean insult...

Combine one word from each of the three columns below, prefaced with "Thou":

Column 1

artless  
bawdy  
beslubbering  
bootless  
churlish  
cockered

Column 2

base-court  
bat-fowling  
beef-witted  
beetle-headed  
boil-brained  
clapper-clawed

Column 3

apple-john  
baggage  
barnacle  
bladder  
boar-pig  
bugbear

Shakespearean kitsch, like insult generators, are wildly popular on the internet.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



Shakespeare is taught in medical schools to foster empathy for the human experience of disease and disability.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



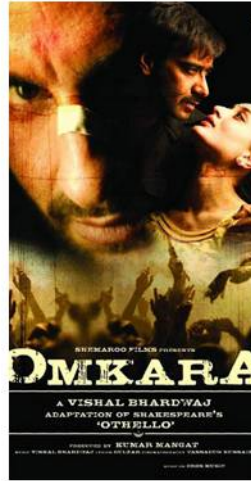
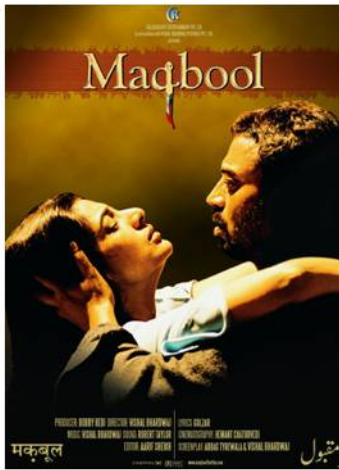
The hip hop artist Akala affirms a place for rap music in the Western canon by pointing out you often can't tell the difference between Shakespeare and rap lyrics.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



Sign Languages have illustrated their vibrancy by translating Shakespeare.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



Shakespeare has a major presence in Indian cinema: these are adaptations from Vishal Bhardwaj, Maqbool / Omkara / Haider.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



The Kuwaiti playwright Sulayman Al-Bassam has adapted several Shakespeare plays to Arab contexts.

Shakespeare has sparked controversies about the role of women on stage in Afghanistan.

Enemies after ethnic wars have come together to stage *Romeo and Juliet*, a play about enemies coming together after war.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



There's avant garde theater, like the Wooster Group's "Cry Trojans,

And immersive theater, like Sleep No More, an adaptation of Macbeth done in different rooms in a hotel that you walk through.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



There's naked Shakespeare.

And drunk Shakespeare, where actors see how long into their bender they can remember their lines.

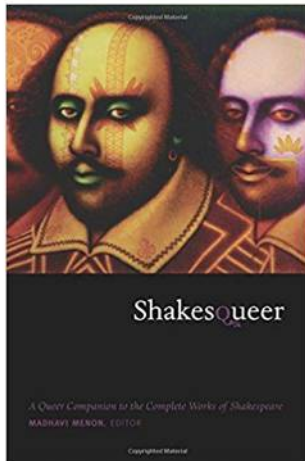
## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



There was “Such Tweet Sorrow,” a version of Romeo and Juliet played out on Twitter.

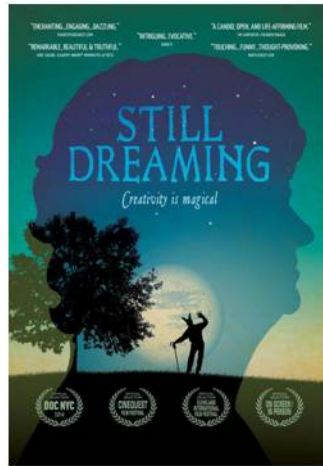
And there are Shakesmemes, where quotes from the plays gloss current events.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



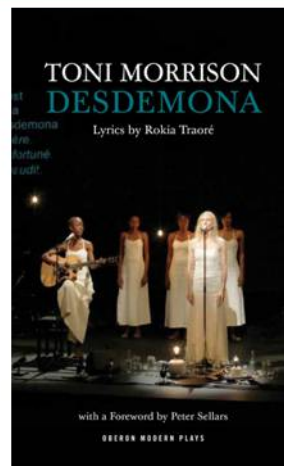
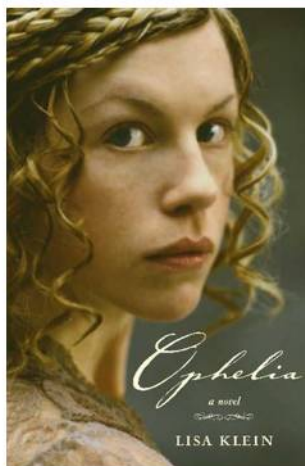
There's the magnificently titled discourse of "Shakespeare Queer," and plenty of Shakespearean manifestations exploring non-binary sexuality.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



Shakespeare has helped elderly actors maintain a sense of value and achievement, as in Hank Rogerson and Jilann Spitzmiller's documentary *Still Dreaming* (2014).

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



Adaptations often recover the voice of characters silenced based on identity; think Lisa Klein's *Ophelia* (2006) and Toni Morrison's *Desdemona* (2011).

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



New plays exposing the nerve-endings of identity – like Abdelkader Benali's *Yasser* (2001), Keith Hamilton Cobb's *American Moor* (2015), and Morgan Lloyd Malcolm's *Emelia* (2018) – cull problems from Shakespeare's works, leveraging his cultural capital for a progressive response.

Pause for questions, comments, conversation.

/:51

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



The opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics, which was an absolute mess, was based on a line from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, "The isle is full of noises."

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)

In conjunction with the Olympics, England launched a “cultural olympics” that presented Shakespeare as the world’s poet. How could that go wrong?

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



There were massive celebrations in 2016 for Shakespeare's 450th birthday.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



Here's up at the Royal Shakespeare Company.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



One group wanted to set a world record on Shakespeare's birthday, so they chartered a plane to perform a Shakespeare play at the highest elevation ever. (As if anyone would ever try to beat that record.) They called it, magnificently, "Shakes on a Plane."

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



The BBC rode the wave of Game of Thrones to produce lush epic films of Shakespeare's history plays.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)

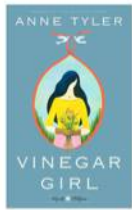
Hogarth Shakespeare



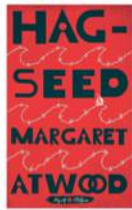
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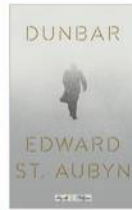
6/21/16



10/11/16



5/16/17



10/3/17



4/10/18

GILLIAN  
FLYNN  
HAMLET

1/5/21

HC

There's the Hogarth Shakespeare series, where prominent novelists rewrite Shakespeare plots in modern settings.

SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



Talk Like Shakespeare Day  
on Shakespeare's 456<sup>th</sup> Birthday  
April 23, 2020

**talk like  
Shakespeare!**

powered by  
Chicago Shakespeare Theater



Talk Like Shakespeare Day

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



UK pays for Mandarin trans

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



A couple years ago, Margot Robbie inked a deal to do some mainstream feminist Shakespeare adaptations.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



It was international news in 2017 when the Oxford Shakespeare announced they were crediting co-authors on nearly half of Shakespeare's plays.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)

Shakespeare has been used to fight nationalism in Europe (at 2:25).

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



The rise of Donald Trump has drawn comparisons to the Netflix hit *House of Cards*, based on Shakespeare's *Richard III*.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



Days after the election, students at the University of Pennsylvania protested Trump by tearing down a portrait of Shakespeare.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



And in Summer 2017, the assassination of a Trump-esque Julius Caesar led corporate sponsors to pull out of the famed Shakespeare in the Park in New York City.

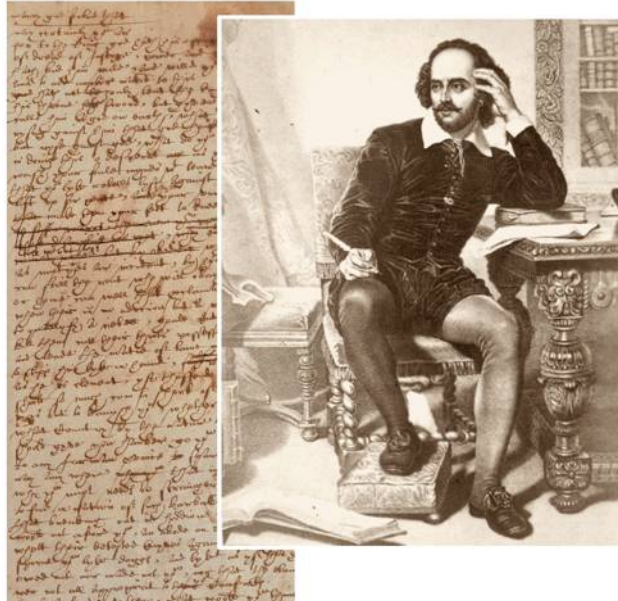
## SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (2000-PRESENT)



In 2018, Unesco granted documents about Shakespeare's life the same preservation status as the Magna Carta.

# Why SHAKESPEARE?

## OUR COURSE



:59:45

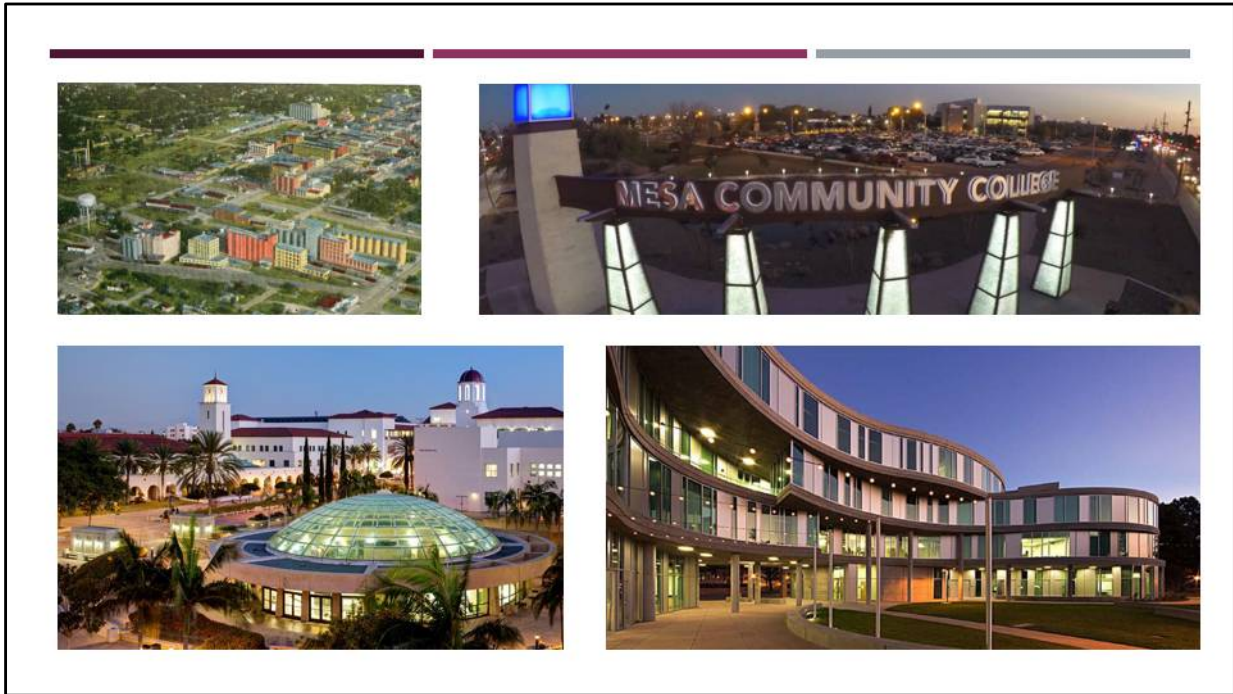
What is going on here? This is the question of our course. Why do so many people love Shakespeare in so many different ways?

/1:00



1:00

/1:00:15



1:00:15

I grew up in Kansas. After a ho-hum high school career, I did community college, San Diego State for undergrad, and UC Irvine for grad school. Started at Harvard in 2014.

I live up in Lowell, MA with my wife, Allison (who's a VP at Northern Essex Community College), and two kids, Liam (7) and Maggie (6). Our extended family of 23 gets together every Sunday night for dinner - no exceptions, no excuses (as I was told when we moved to Lowell). Our kids are into lacrosse, taekwondo, guitar, piano, basketball, and skiing.

/1:01:45

## SHAKESPEARE'S HUNCH



1:01:45

Shakespeare's Hunch tells the story of the medieval king Richard III's physical deformity and its surprisingly prominent role in modern thought.

/1:02

## STIGMA IN SHAKESPEARE



1:02

Stigma in Shakespeare is about the characters marked as inferior – because they're physically deformed, racially different, born bastards, and so forth – and Shakespeare's progressive attitude toward social others.

/1:02:15

## ESSAYS ON HAMLET



1:02:15

My Essays on Hamlet book was born out of your first assignment in this course: every time I assign a five-page essay on Hamlet, I write one myself.

/1:02:30

## SHAKESPEARE AND CRIMINOLOGY



1:02:30

I also work in the field of Criminal Justice: Shakespeare and Criminology is about how we can think about crime and justice today in the context of Shakespeare's plays.

/1:02:45

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND THE HUMANITIES



1:02:45

Criminal Justice and the Humanities then branches out to ask how we can use fields like literary studies, philosophy, and history to build a better system of justice in the United States.

/1:03

## SHAKESPEARE AND TRUMP



1:03

Given my interests, it was inevitable I would write a book about Shakespeare and Trump, looking at the modernity of Shakespeare's politics and the theatricality of Trump's. That's coming out next March.

/1:03:15



1:03:15

/1:03:30

# SYLLABUS

Expository Writing 20: Why Shakespeare?

Course Summary:

Date	Details
Tue Feb 4, 2020	Lesson 1: Academic Writing in Action
Tue Feb 4, 2020	Lesson 2: From Writer's Center
Tue Feb 4, 2020	Lesson 3: What is Academic Writing?
Tue Feb 4, 2020	Lesson 4: Genre and Office Hours
Tue Feb 4, 2020	Lesson 5: Student Support Services
Tue Feb 4, 2020	Midterm Exam
Tue Feb 11, 2020	Lesson 6: Writing Assignments
Tue Feb 11, 2020	Lesson 7: What's a Good Reading?
Tue Feb 11, 2020	Lesson 8: What is a Single-Sentence Essay?
Tue Feb 11, 2020	Lesson 9: Research Paper 1.1: Questions and Answers
Tue Feb 11, 2020	Lesson 10: Research Paper 1.2: Questions and Answers

**Why SHAKESPEARE?**

Katherine D. Kelly, Ph.D.  
College of Arts & Sciences, SUNY at Stony Brook  
This book is 200 pages, 11.5 x 8.5 inches, ISBN 978-1-108-48888-7  
© 2019, all rights reserved by the author  
Published by SUNY Press, 2019  
Library of Congress: 2019-012200  
ISBN-10: 978-1-108-48888-7  
ISBN-13: 978-1-108-48888-7

- Read, email me, and come to class next time with questions.
- Course Argument: We'll talk about in class next time.
- Aphorisms: Readings providing more formal discussions of ideas addressed in class.

1:03:30

/1:04

# COURSE SUMMARY

Expository Writing 20: Why Shakespeare?

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due by
Tue Feb 4, 2020	Session 1: Academic Writing in Action	None to Date
	Start of Term Welcome Letter	Due by 8:00am
Thu Feb 6, 2020	Session 2: What is Academic Writing?	None to Date
	Peer and Guest Office Hours	Open to Peer 7:00-8:00am
Sun Feb 9, 2020	Additional Student Learning	None to Date
	Writing Review	Due by 8:00am
	Writing Writing Assignments	Due by 8:00am
Tue Feb 11, 2020	What Needs Class Meeting?	Due by 8:00am
	Session 3: What is a Single Source Essay?	None to Date
	Session 4: Paper 1 & Questions and Problems	Due by 8:00am
Thu Feb 13, 2020	Session 5: Evidence, Analysis, Argument	None to Date

Session 1: Academic Writing in Action

In-Class Discussions

- Introduce class: Start getting to know each other, and some of the ways we'll foster a good learning experience through an inclusive, supportive, accessible classroom.
- Why Shakespeare in High School? Introduce the question of our course by asking, "Why is Shakespeare so popular in modern US high schools?"
- How Shakespeare? Frame the question of our course by looking at Shakespeare's reception over time.
- Our Course Briefly address the central question of our course, and how our course will work (more on this in the next session).
- Our Canvas Site Briefly review our Canvas site, discuss assignments for next time.
- "It started like a party thing": Launch our conversations of our first text. Aloud, with a reading of the opening scene.

Assignments

- Start of Term Welcome Letter: Write a one-page letter introducing yourself to me and reflecting on your life as a writer.
- Sign up for Peer and Guest Office Hours and Optional Student Learning.

1:04:30

/1:05

## EXPOS 20: WHY SHAKESPEARE? SESSION ONE: ACADEMIC WRITING IN ACTION

### **In-Class Discussions:**

- *Introductions:* Start getting to know each other, and some of the ways we'll foster a good learning experience through an inclusive, supportive, accessible classroom.
- *Why Shakespeare in High School?:* Introduce the question of our course by asking, "Why is Shakespeare so popular in modern US high schools?"
- *How Shakespeare?:* Frame the question of our course by looking at Shakespeare's reception over time.
- *Our Course:* Briefly address the central question of our course, and how our course will work (more on this in the next session).
- *Our Canvas Site:* Briefly review our Canvas site; discuss assignments for next time.
- *"It started like a guilty thing":* Launch our conversations of our first text, *Hamlet*, with a reading of the opening scene.

### **Assignments:**

- [Start-of-Term Writer's Letter](#): Write a one-page letter introducing yourself to me and reflecting on your life as a writer.
- Sign up for [Meet-and-Greet Office Hours](#) and [Optional Hamlet Screening](#).

Each class will start out with this screen, which

# SIGN-UPS

Wed, Feb 5  
10:00am Meet and Greet Office Hours - 1 Available

Thu, Feb 6  
Due 8:59am Start  
9:00am Sessio

Sun, Feb 9  
5:00pm Optio

Tue, Feb 11  
Due 8:59am Not U  
Due 8:59am Read  
Due 8:59am What Needs Close Reading?

9:00am Session 2: What is a Single-Source Essay?

Thu, Feb 13

**Meet and Greet Office Hours**

Feb 5, 10am - 12:00pm

Calendar Expository Writing 20: Why Shakespeare?

Location 1 Bow Street, #236

Details Please sign up for a time to come by my office (1 Bow Street, second floor, #236) for a short meet and greet. It will just be a chance for us to touch base before we get the semester underway.

Slots 1 available

Group Details Delete Edit

Sun, Feb 9  
10:00pm Optional Hamlet Screening - Available

Tue, Feb 11  
Due 8:59am Not U  
Due 8:59am Read  
Due 8:59am What  
9:00am Sessio

Thu, Feb 12  
Due 8:59am Missed  
9:00am Sessio  
12:00pm Offic

Tue, Feb 18  
Due 8:59am Missed  
9:00am Sessio

Thu, Feb 20  
Due 8:59am Missed  
9:00am Sessio & Structure for Single-Source Essay

**Optional Hamlet Screening**

Feb 9, Sun, 10pm

Calendar Expository Writing 20: Why Shakespeare?

Location 1 Bow St., Seminar Room

Details We'll be watching the four-hour (?!?) Kenneth Branagh version. Yes, it's long, but that's what it takes to stage the whole text of Hamlet without cuts. The good news is that, since you've seen the film, you've "read" Hamlet. I really do encourage you to use the films in our class to "read" the texts; it's so much easier to understand a play when it's being performed (as it was meant to be). You're free to bring your book if you want to follow along and take notes, or just enjoy the movie on the first pass and you can go back for more in-depth study later. If you need, you can certainly come late or leave early (I know it's hard for a Hamlet problem to get a four-hour block of time doing one thing). You're welcome to bring your own dinner; I'll have some snacks for the 8PMish.

If you can't find the room, feel free to call Wilson at (949) 423-3875.

Group Details Delete Edit

1:04

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“IT STARTED LIKE A GUILTY THING”



1:05

Some of you may have read *Hamlet*. Even if you haven't, you might know what it's about. Revenge, ghosts, madness.

Let's start over. Let's read *Hamlet* as if we've never read it before, never even heard of it. You'll find that it's actually about quite a bit more than our culture gives it credit for.

It begins with a king who has died. A figure looking like the dead king has appeared to some soldiers sent to guard the castle of Elsinore – they don't know why, nor do we in the audience.

/1:06

## “IT STARTED LIKE A GUILTY THING”



William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599):

Such was the very armour he had on  
When he the ambitious Norway combated;  
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,  
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.  
'Tis strange. (1.1.60-64)

This figure was armored up, suggesting something of a warrior king, and this intimation of a warrior king is immediately confirmed by a man named Horatio, the only one around who has any idea what's going on:

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There really is something “strange” about Horatio’s story. A technical term of combat, “parle” means peaceful negotiations between the opposing sides of a conflict. In fact, the Oxford English Dictionary cites this line from *Hamlet* for its definition: “A debate or conference; discussion; negotiation; spec. a meeting between enemies or opposing parties to discuss the terms of an armistice.” But the former king, if Horatio can be taken at his word, once slaughtered a slew of Polacks while in parlay. This is not the only possible reading of this line. Perhaps Horatio is trying to be metaphorical or glib – and there is some editorial dispute over the phrase “sledded Polacks” – but the most straightforward reading of the first substantive bit of information we get about King Hamlet is that he was a warrior king who did not respect the laws of war.

## “IT STARTED LIKE A GUILTY THING”

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599):

Our last king,  
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,  
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,  
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,  
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet—  
For so this side of our known world esteem'd him—  
Did slay this Fortinbras; who by a seal'd compact,  
Well ratified by law and heraldry,  
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands  
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror:  
Against the which, a moiety competent  
Was gaged by our king; which had return'd  
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,  
Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same covenant,  
And carriage of the article design'd,  
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,  
Of unimproved mettle hot and full,  
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there  
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolute,  
For food and diet, to some enterprise  
That hath a stomach in't; which is no other—  
As it doth well appear unto our state—  
But to recover of us, by strong hand  
And terms compulsory, those foresaid lands  
So by his father lost; and this, I take it,  
Is the main motive of our preparations,  
The source of this our watch and the chief head  
Of this post-haste and romage in the land. (1.1.80-107)

1:09

This image of a somewhat scandalous King Hamlet is amplified as Horatio proceeds to explain why Denmark is on high alert.

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1:11:30

A scholar and a skeptic, Horatio tells the story of King Hamlet in a way that calls the quality of the King's character and reign into question. As Horatio tells it, King Hamlet's reckless actions directly led to the endangerment of Denmark and the need for guards to be posted on watch. It all began, Horatio explains, when Fortinbras of Norway challenged King Hamlet to a duel. According to the conventions of heraldry, the winner of this duel would receive the land under dispute (so here we are, effectively, in a Jerusalem being claimed by both Israel and Palestine). The winner would expand his land, his subjects, his resources, his power, and thereby his ability to govern and protect his people, but that is not why King Hamlet accepted Fortinbras's challenge, at least not in Horatio's eyes. King Hamlet sallied out to the field to fight Fortinbras with everything on the line because Hamlet was "pricked on by a most emulate pride." King Hamlet wanted to preserve his honor, not to enlarge his resources and capacity to rule, but to be seen as the better, stronger, braver man.

The stakes could not be higher, but is this really a game you want your king to be playing? I wouldn't want President Obama wagering Alaska in a fistfight with Putin. What if he lost? Here, a modern reader might try to hide behind the indignant charge

of anachronism: *That's just how they did things in those days, and we shouldn't hold Shakespeare's medieval king accountable to modern standards of politics* . It must be remembered, however, that in 1599 Shakespeare was telling a story that was already several centuries old. His audience would have had the same reaction that we do. They wouldn't have wanted Queen Elizabeth fighting King Philip of Spain for the other's territories. What if she lost? Then those allegiances and resources would suddenly be redirected to an outside ruler who did not have the land's best interest at heart. It's not anachronistic to view King Hamlet as a reckless ruler. It's common sense.

Thank goodness he won, and yet in winning that duel, acquiring a part of Norway, disinheriting the young Fortinbras, who therefore mounts an army to attack Denmark and reclaim his birthright, King Hamlet has directly endangered his people to satisfy his pride. Arguably, there was no possible good outcome to Fortinbras's challenge: either King Hamlet could refuse to fight and be seen by his enemies as weak; or accept the challenge, lose the duel, and lose his land; or win the duel and start a blood feud in which he and his people would never be safe. Arguably, tragedy is the logical conclusion of a culture of honor .

/1:14:30

## “IT STARTED LIKE A GUILTY THING”



William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (ca. 1599):

[Hor.] It started like a guilty thing. (1.1.148)

1:14:30

Perhaps this is why, when a cock crows at the end of the first scene of *Hamlet*, the Ghost “started like a guilty thing” (1.1.148). The whole point of the first scene is that the former king is guilty – guilty of being a bad man and a bad king.

/1:15

## EXPOS 20: WHY SHAKESPEARE? SESSION ONE: ACADEMIC WRITING IN ACTION

### **In-Class Discussions:**

- *Introductions:* Start getting to know each other, and some of the ways we'll foster a good learning experience through an inclusive, supportive, accessible classroom.
- *Why Shakespeare in High School?:* Introduce the question of our course by asking, "Why is Shakespeare so popular in modern US high schools?"
- *How Shakespeare?:* Frame the question of our course by looking at Shakespeare's reception over time.
- *Our Course:* Briefly address the central question of our course, and how our course will work (more on this in the next session).
- *Our Canvas Site:* Briefly review our Canvas site; discuss assignments for next time.
- *"It started like a guilty thing":* Launch our conversations of our first text, *Hamlet*, with a reading of the opening scene.

### **Assignments:**

- *Start-of-Term Writer's Letter:* Write a one-page letter introducing yourself to me and reflecting on your life as a writer.
- Sign up for [Meet-and-Greet Office Hours](#) and [Optional Hamlet Screening](#).

Each class will start out with this screen, which